

No, wait.

Another look and I see they do not
touch the ground after all,

only one another.

-- Ronald Koertge

Pasadena CA

the bells were ringing for me and my gal

i was reading a book yesterday
when the doorbell rang.
it was a bad book,
but it was necessary that i read it.
in order not to be interrupted
on those rare occasions
when i am trying to do some work,
i give almost nobody my address or telephone number.
nonetheless, the doorbell went ding-dong.

it was a hare-krishna.
he wore a shaved head, salmon negligee,
and bad skin.
i sympathize with bad skin,
having always had a bad skin myself,
but that does not oblige me to enjoy
the sight of it.

"happy tomorrow," he said,
"i have a book i'd like you to read."
it was the bhagavad-gita.
"i've read it," i said,
"i've read it five or six times;
i teach folklore-mythology."
"oh," he said, visibly disconcerted,
"then perhaps you'd care to make a contribution."
"do you recall," i asked, "the advice
that krishna tendered us concerning panhandlers?"
"no," he said, tugging at his pigtail.
"it's in the apocrypha," i said;
"a loose translation would be 'fuck 'em.'"
and i shut the door in his face.

a while later the doorbell rang again,
ding-dong-ding-dong.
it was a straight-looking young man

who nonetheless had bad skin.
"hello," he said, "my name is kenny warmth
and i've taken this time away from my family
to chat with my fellow christians concerning our Creator."

i stood there looking at him.

"you do believe in the Creator, don't you?"

"no," i said.

"you don't? may i inquire why?"

"no," i said, and i shut the door in his face.

then i went back to my book.
it was truly a bad book,
an urban-jewish-pseudo-radical-pseudo-joycean crapola.
my girlfriend was in the bedroom
flat on her ass with a hangover.
i don't think she'd ever had a classic one before
because she kept saying, "i think i have a brain tumor."
every fifty pages i would take a break
and bring her a dram of coke
and a fresh cold compress.

about page 375 the doorbell went crazy:
ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-
ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-
ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-
ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-ding-dong-

whatever maniac was out there had to be
operating under the delusion that he was
either zubin mehta, a fire truck, santa's sled,
or the whole fucking salvation army.

i was at that door in the wink of a sphincter.
it was another hare-krishna.
this one wore glasses along with
his shaved head, pigtail, salmon negligee,
and bad skin.

"happy tomorrow -- " he began.

i won't reproduce here our somewhat one-sided
conversation. let it merely be suggested
that his departure was not long delayed
and that, from the shrinking terror in his eyes,
i think it safe to rack up one more convert
to the manichaeian view of life.